

Example of Negro Preaching

I want to give you just one example of the ordinary Negro preaching. The ignorant ones are so much more numerous than the intelligent ones! I went out into the country, one Sunday, and there came in a very distinguished looking colored man wearing a very long coat and a tall hat. The people sat down in church and sang a number of the old-time songs. The minister began to preach. He said, "I am going to preach a sermon to-day about the nouns, pronouns, pre-nouns, upper nouns and low nouns." And he preached, and at length and in detail, about the pronouns and the pre-nouns and all the nouns, and he had the people saying "Yes," "Amen," and shouting. He sat down and got his collection. But he did not say anything that elevated the people. You say, "Is that a real thing?" I might just as well tell the truth. In many sections of our country districts where eight, ten or twelve thousand of our Negroes live, they must listen to that kind of preaching. It is all they get.

Question. Don't you think it would be a great deal better to have a planned course of questions and answers than for such a man to give them talks from the Bible?

Answer. I think there ought to be something well planned and from the Bible.

Literature and the Bible

About a year ago, I went into a Sunday-school in Thomasville, Ga. It had three hundred pupils, all Negroes. This school was considered one of the best in the South. I went into the adult Bible Class and, of course, made a pretense of following the lesson; but we did not have any Bibles, and judging from what I saw, none of the classes had them. When the superintendent was through reviewing the lesson, he asked me to say a word, and, after waiting a moment, I picked up my Bible and said, "This is the text-book of the Sunday-school. I want to find out how many boys and girls brought their text-books along. I want you to stand and hold up your text-books." There was one Bible beside the one on the pulpit and the one I had. They were depending entirely upon the lesson leaflet sent out by the publishing houses. It would have been better if that teacher had left out these questions and we had studied the Bible.

Many Sunday-Schools Not Using the Bible

That is what they should have been doing and that is the book they should take up and study directly. I feel that there are many organized Sunday-schools which are not using the Bible,

and are not teaching the young people to use it; but of course there are many which are teaching the young people how to use the Bible and I believe this is one of the chief means in the work, to study this Bible and understand it. They should ask not lesson-leaf questions but Bible questions. I would take this Bible to Sunday-school alone and I would leave the lesson-leaf at home; and I would be so familiar with it that the children whom I shall teach would be anxious to study and become familiar with the Bible.

DR. BOYD. I want to ask if this was a city where they could have bought a Bible.

Answer. Yes, sir. Right in that town. I didn't buy one there, but I know they can be bought.

Question. But is it not a fact that there are plenty of places from three and sometimes four hundred miles from such a district, where there is no place for selling Bibles?

Answer. I know of no such district. The pastor can always get Bibles as easily as he can get leaflets.

REPLY OF DR. BOYD. I knew a lawyer in Georgia, who had a habit of carrying his books and laying them on the table. I asked him, "Why do you carry your books along?" He said, "I just carry them along to convince the judge that I know the law."

Needs of the Negroes

MR. MATTHEWS. I want to come to the needs of the Negro people. Sympathy, heartfelt sympathy, from our white people in the South, as well as in the North, is what we need most. The Negro needs true sympathy, rightly directed sympathy, from southern as well as northern people; we need direction; we need some one who will direct us right, who has made a study of the situation and who will lift us up and treat us as Christians and as men. The Negroes are driven very often discouraged because they have no friend who will sympathize with them. We need better homes. We need to move out of these crowded tenements and get into homes where we may learn to organize that home and where we may protect our people from the invasion of the blackguard, be he white or black. We need better schools, more schools, better equipment, better paid teachers, in every section where we find the Negro in large numbers.

The Kind of Ministry Needed

We need, more than anything else, devoted, consecrated, educated men for the ministry among the Negro people. They